ABOUT WRITING: A GUIDE

Revised Edition

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REVISING

COMPOSING

TYPES OF WRITING STYLES

There are four main types of writing: expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative. Each of these writing styles is used for a specific purpose. A single text may include more than one writing style.

EXPOSITORY

Expository writing is one of the most common types of writing. When an author writes in an expository style, all they are trying to do is explain a concept, imparting information from themselves to a wider audience. Expository writing does not include the author's opinions, but focuses on accepted facts about a topic, including statistics or other evidence.

Examples of Expository Writing

- Textbooks
- How-to articles
- Recipes
- News stories (not editorials or Op-Eds)
- Business, technical, or scientific writing

DESCRIPTIVE

Descriptive writing is often found in fiction, though it can make an appearance in nonfiction as well (for example, memoirs, first-hand accounts of events, or travel guides). When an author writes in a descriptive style, they are painting a picture in words of a person, place, or thing for their audience. The author might employ metaphor or other literary devices in order to describe the author's impressions via their five senses (what they hear, see, smell, taste, or touch). But the author is not trying to convince the audience of anything or explain the scene – merely describe things as they are.

Examples of Descriptive Writing

- Poetry
- Journal/diary writing
- Descriptions of Nature
- Fictional novels or plays

PERSUASIVE

Persuasive writing is the main style of writing you will use in academic papers. When an author writes in a persuasive style, they are trying to convince the audience of a position or belief. Persuasive writing contains the author's opinions and biases, as well as justifications and reasons given by the author as evidence of the correctness of their position. Any "argumentative" essay you write in school should be in the persuasive style of writing.

Examples of Persuasive Writing

- Cover letters
- Op-Eds and Editorial newspaper articles
- Reviews of items
- Letters of complaint
- Advertisements
- Letters of recommendation

NARRATIVE

Narrative writing is used in almost every longer piece of writing, whether fiction or nonfiction. When an author writes in a narrative style, they are not just trying to impart information, they are trying to construct and communicate a story, complete with characters, conflict, and settings.

Examples of Narrative Writing

- Oral histories
- Novels/Novellas
- Poetry (especially epic sagas or poems)
- Short Stories
- Anecdotes

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSIGNMENT

There are four kinds of analysis you need to do in order to fully understand an assignment: determining the purpose of the assignment, understanding how to answer an assignment's questions, recognizing implied questions in the assignment, and recognizing the disciplinary expectations of the assignment.

Always make sure you fully understand an assignment before you start writing!

DETERMINING THE PURPOSE

The wording of an assignment should suggest its purpose. Any of the following might be expected of you in a college writing assignment:

- Summarizing information
- Analyzing ideas and concepts
- Taking a position and defending it
- Combining ideas from several sources and creating your own original argument.

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO ANSWER THE ASSIGNMENT

College writing assignments will ask you to answer a *how* or *why* question – questions that can't be answered with just facts. For example, the question "*What* are the names of the presidents of

the US in the last twenty years?" needs only a list of facts to be answered. The question "*Who* was the best president of the last twenty years and *why?*" requires you to take a position and support that position with evidence.

Sometimes, a list of prompts may appear with an assignment. Remember, your instructor will not expect you to answer all of the questions listed. They are simply offering you some ideas so that you can think of your own questions to ask.

RECOGNIZING IMPLIED QUESTIONS

A prompt may not include a clear 'how' or 'why' question, though one is always implied by the language of the prompt. For example:

> "Discuss the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act on special education programs" is asking you to write *how* the act has affected special education programs.
>
> "Consider the recent rise of autism diagnoses" is asking you to write *why* the diagnoses of autism are on the rise.

RECOGNIZING DISCIPLINARY EXPECTATIONS

Depending on the discipline in which you are writing, different features and formats of your writing may be expected. Always look closely at key terms and vocabulary in the writing assignment, and be sure to note what type of evidence and citations style your instructor expects.

ASSESSING THE WRITING SITUATION

Before beginning the writing process, always establish the following:

- Is there an assigned topic or are you free to choose your own?
- What about your subject interests you?
- Why is your subject worth reading about?
- Double check that your subject is not too broad – narrow it down if necessary.
- Determine the purpose of the work.
- Determine the readers of the work and their level of knowledge about the topic.
- Determine where your evidence will come from.
- Decide what kind of evidence would best serve your argument.
- Identify the required style (MLA, APA, etc.) of the paper.
- Be aware of length specifications.
- Consider if visuals might be helpful in your paper.
- Will someone be reviewing drafts of your paper? Who?
- Note your deadline and how much time you have for each stage of the writing process.

TEST YOUR THESIS

You've come up with what you hope will be a great thesis for your paper. Want to make sure before you get started with it? Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does your thesis take a position, propose a solution, or answer a question?
2. Does your thesis give you enough material to write a full-length paper?
3. Can you come up with interpretations of your thesis that don't match your own?
4. Is there evidence to support your thesis?
5. Will readers want to read an essay with this thesis?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'no,' you need to revise your thesis.

CONSTRUCTING AN OUTLINE

I. Put the thesis at the top.

A. Make items at the same level have the same grammar/tenses.

B. Use full sentences when possible.

1. Use the conventional system of numbering (such as the one being demonstrated now).

2. Always include at least two items per level.

a. Use as few major sections (I., II., III., etc.) as possible.

b. If the list gets too long, try clustering the items into broader categories with more subcategories.

CHECKLIST: PLANNING A DOCUMENT

- Determine your document's purpose.
- Plan your document's design to support this purpose.
- Identify your document's audience.
- Identify your audience's expectations.
- Decide what format your document will require (include layout, margins, line spacing, font styles, etc.).
- Decide whether or not visuals will be helpful to include in your document. If you decide to use visuals, determine what kind of visual would be most useful.

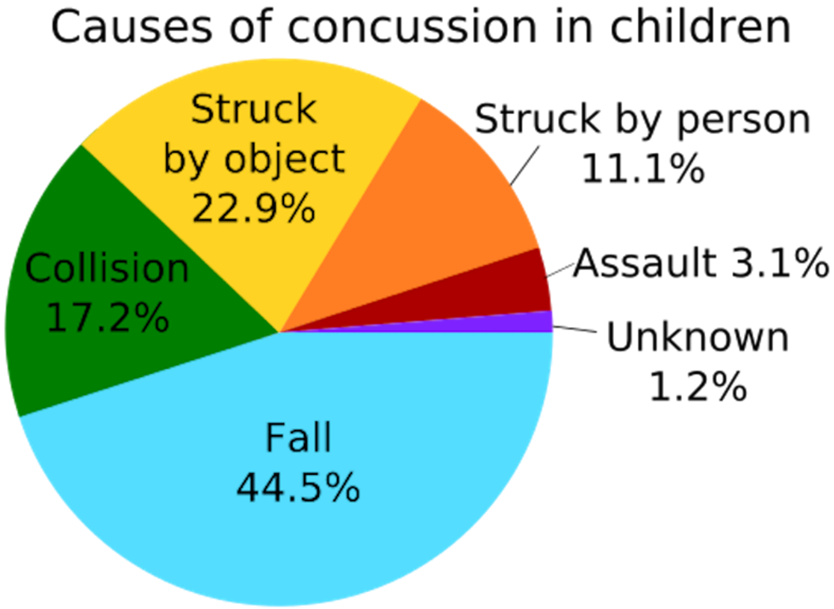
TRANSITIONS

Addition	and, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, next, too, first, second
Examples	for example, for instance, to illustrate, in fact, specifically
Compare	also, similarly, likewise
Contrast	but, however, on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, still, even though, on the contrary, yet, although
Summarize/ Conclude	in other words, in short, in conclusion, to sum up, therefore
Time	after, as, before, next, during, later, finally, meanwhile, since, then, when, while, immediately
Place/ Direction	above, below, beyond, farther on, nearby, opposite, close, to the left
Logical Relationship	if, so, therefore, consequently, thus, as a result, for this reason, because, since

VISUALS HELP YOU COMMUNICATE

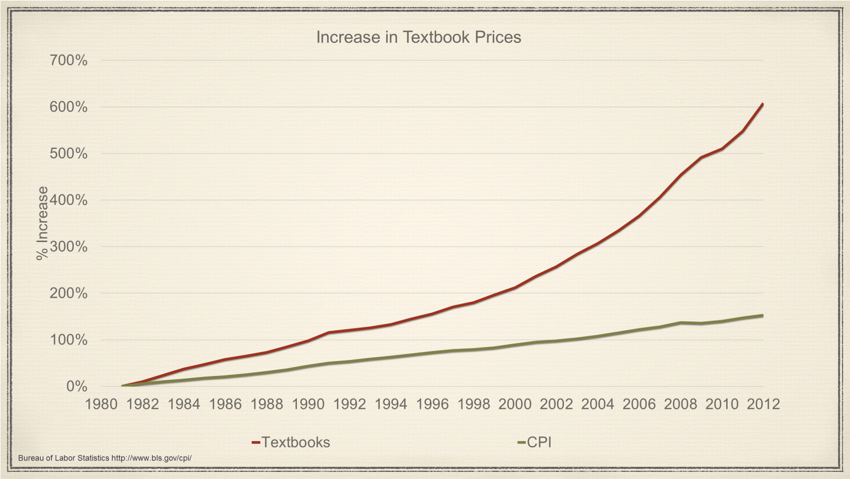
PIE CHART

Pie charts are great for illustrating comparisons between a part and the whole. Segments of the chart represent percentages of the whole.



LINE GRAPH

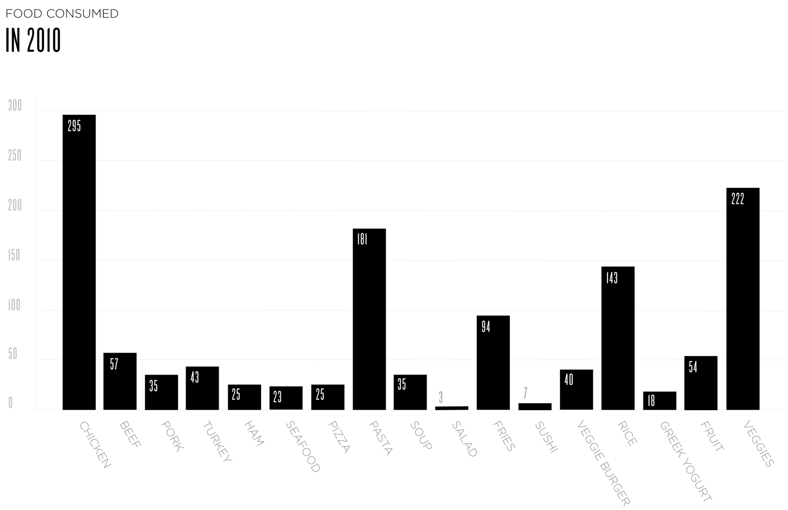
Line graphs help you emphasize a particular trend over time.



"Increase in Textbook Prices" by David Ernst, Open Textbook Network is licensed under CC BY 4.0

BAR GRAPH

Bar graphs serve basically the same purpose as line graphs, emphasizing trends over a particular period of time.



"Single Bar Graph" by Lauren Manning is licensed under CC BY 2.0

TABLE

Tables are a good way to visually organize complex numerical information, especially if you have a lot of data.

Bookstore Weekly Schedule Week of May 1-7

	Sun 5/1	Mon 5/2	Tue 5/3	Wed 5/4	Thu 5/5	Fri 5/6	Sat 5/7
Brown, M.	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-1pm				
Gordon, A.	11am-8pm	11am-8pm	7am-11am		9am-6pm	9am-6pm	
Lawton, N.		11am-8pm	11am-8pm	7am-11am			
Shiro, I.					9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-1pm
Vasquez, A.	11am-8pm					11am-8pm	7am-11am

PHOTOGRAPH

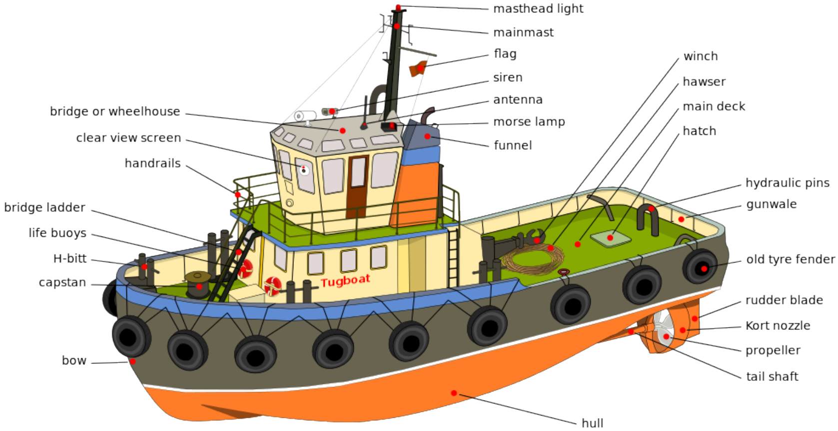
Photographs depict people, situations, or ideas that might be discussed in your text.



"College" by univfajar is in the Public Domain, CC0

DIAGRAM

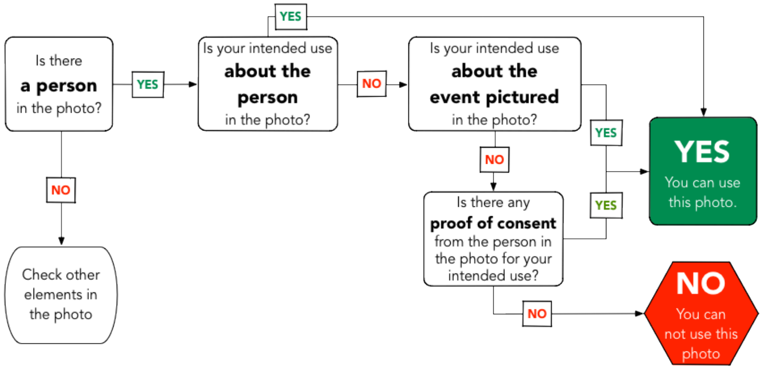
Diagrams are used most often in scientific or technical writing because of their ability to convey complex processes and structures simply.



"Tugboat diagram" by Al2 with minor modifications by Lycaon – Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons.

FLOWCHART

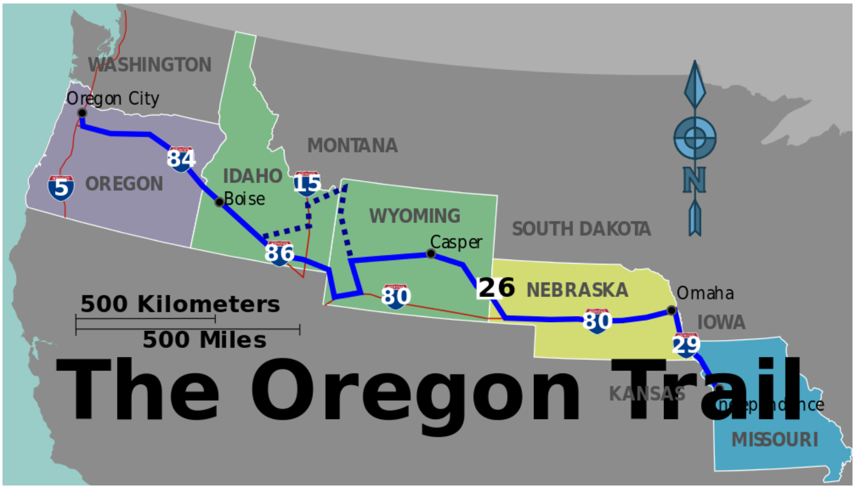
Flowcharts are great for showing structure as well as steps in a linear process.



"Flow chart determining reusability of a portrait photo" by Sebastiaan ter Burg is licensed under CC BY 4.0

MAP

Maps are the perfect choice for illustrating geographical distances, demographics, or other data that is at least partially dependent on place.



"Oregon Trail wikivoyage map" by Gorilla Jones is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

ACADEMIC WRITING

ACTIVE READING

Start by getting familiar with the basic parts and structure of the text:

- What kind of text are you reading? An essay? A web site?
- Every author has a purpose; find it.
- Who is the audience and how does the author try to appeal to them?
- What argument is the author making/question does the text try to answer?
- What evidence does the author provide?
- Are there any key terms the author defines?

As you're reading, make note of anything that especially catches your attention:

- Is there a fact or point that challenged your assumptions?
- Any surprises?
- Did the author make a point or argument that you disagree with?
- Are there any inconsistencies in the text?
- Does the text contain anything (words, phrases, ideas) that you don't understand?

After you've finished reading, read it again:

- Are there things you didn't notice the first time reading the text?
- Does the text leave some questions open-ended?
- Imagine the author is sitting across from you: what would you ask them about the text? Why?

If the text is visual in nature, try these extra tips:

- What first strikes you about the image?
- Who/what is the main subject of the visual?
- What colors/textures dominate the visual?
- What objects/people are in the background/foreground?
- Do words or numbers play any role in the visual?
- When was the visual created?

ANALYZING A TEXT

WRITTEN TEXTS

When you analyze an essay or article, consider these questions:

- What is the thesis or central idea of the text?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What questions does the author address?
- How does the author structure the text?
- What are the key parts of the text?
- How do the key parts of the text interrelate?
- How do the key parts of the text relate to the thesis?
- What does the author do to generate interest in the argument?
- How does the author convince the readers of their argument's merit?
- What evidence is provided in support of the thesis?
- Is the evidence in the text convincing?
- Has the author anticipated opposing views and countered them?
- Is the author's reasoning sound?

VISUAL TEXTS

When you analyze a piece of visual work, consider these questions:

- What confuses, surprises, or interests you about the image?
- In what medium is the visual?
- Where is the visual from?
- Who created the visual?
- For what purpose was the visual created?
- Identify any clues that suggest the visual's intended audience.
- How does this image appeal to that audience?
- In the case of advertisements, what product is the visual selling?
- In the case of advertisements, is the visual selling an additional message or idea?
- If words are included in the visual, how do they contribute to the meaning?
- Identify design elements – colors, shapes, perspective, and background – and speculate how they help to convey the visual's meaning or purpose.

RHETORICAL CONCEPTS

During your time as a student of writing, you may hear instructors talk about "rhetorical situations." This is a term used to talk about any set of circumstances in which one person is trying to change another person's mind about something, most often via text (like a book, or blog post, or journal article).

These rhetorical situations can be better understood by examining the rhetorical concepts that they are built from. The philosopher Aristotle called these concepts logos, ethos, pathos, telos, and kairos – also known as text, author, audience, purposes, and setting.

TEXT (LOGOS)

Texts can come in all shapes and sizes, such as those listed earlier. But in this context, text is not limited to something written down. The text in a rhetorical situation could be a film, or a photograph, or a recording of a song or history. The important thing to ask yourself when faced with a text, no matter what it is, is what is gained by having the text composed in this format/genre. What are the relevant characteristics of a book versus a song? What might an oral history version of a text communicate that a book version would not?

AUTHOR (ETHOS)

Here the "author" of a text is the creator, the person utilizing

communication to try to effect a change in their audience. An author doesn't have to be a single person, or a person at all – an author could be an organization. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, examine the identity of the author and their background. Not only do you want to know what kind of experience they have in the subject, but you'll also want to explore basic biographical information about them. Where and when did they grow up? How could that affect their perspective on the topic?

AUDIENCE (PATHOS)

The audience is any person or group who is the intended recipient of the text, and also the person/people the text is trying to influence. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, examine who the intended audience is and what their background may be. An audiences' assumptions about the author, the context in which they are receiving the text, their own demographic information (age, gender, etc.) can all effect how the text is seeking to engage with them.

PURPOSES (TELOS)

What is the author hoping to achieve with the communication of this text? What do they want from their audience? What does the audience want from the text and what may they do once the text is communicated? Both author and audience can have purpose and it's important to understand what those might be in the rhetorical situation of the text you are examining. An author may be trying to inform, to convince, to define, to announce, or to activate, while an audience's purpose may be to receive notice, to quantify, to feel a sense of unity, to disprove, to understand, or to criticize. Any and all of these purposes determine the 'why' behind the decisions both groups make.

SETTING (KAIROS)

Nothing happens in a vacuum, and that includes the text you are

trying to understand. It was written in a specific time, context, and/or place, all of which can affect the way the text communicates its message. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, examine the setting of both audience and author and ask yourself if there was a particular occasion or event that prompted the particular text at the particular time it was written.

ACADEMIC WRITING: POINT OF VIEW

If you're sitting down to write an analytical or research essay (common in the humanities), use the third-person point of view: *Achebe argues…* or *Carter describes her experiences as...*

Scientists (including social scientists) tend to use third-person point of view as well, because they depend largely on quantitative research to present their findings or support their opinions: *The results indicated...*

Occasionally, social scientists and writers in the humanities will use first person to discuss their own experiences while doing research or if writing part of a personal narrative as evidence: *After spending a year living with the Upendi, I came to the conclusion that...* or *Every Christmas we went to the same place, as if our memories could be rekindled...*

ACADEMIC WRITING: VERB TENSE

Scholars of literature use the present tense to talk about a text: *Humphrey's continual references to the color pink further emphasizes the imagery of the rose...*

Scientists (including social scientists) use the past tense to talk about experiments, and only use the present tense when discussing results of those experiments: *In 2013, Baker conducted the first of his experiments... His results are interesting, if inconclusive.*

History writers use present, or present perfect tense, to discuss their texts: *Shirley Macintyre writes in her diary that the fighting was fiercest on the ridge...* or *Shirley Macintyre has written that the fighting was fiercest on the ridge...*

HOW TO: WRITE A SUMMARY

At the very beginning of your summary, mention the title of the text you are summarizing, the name of the author, and the central point or argument of the text. Always maintain a neutral tone and use the third-person point of view and present tense (i.e. *Tompkins asserts…*). Keep the focus of the summary on the text, not on what you think of it, and try to put as most of the summary as you can in your own words. Present the text's main points only and be concise! Every word counts.

COUNTERING OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

Almost anything you can argue or claim in a paper can be refuted. Opposing points of view and arguments exist in every debate, and it's important to anticipate possible objections to your arguments. In order to do that, ask yourself the following questions:

- Could someone draw a different conclusion from the facts or examples you present?
- Could a reader question any of your assumptions or claims?
- Could a reader offer a different explanation of an issue?
- Is there any evidence out there that could weaken your position?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, the next set of questions can help you respond to these potential objections:

- Is it possible to concede the point of the opposition, but then challenge that point's importance/usefulness?
- Can you offer an explanation of why a reader should question a piece of evidence or consider a different point of view?
- Can you explain how your position responds to any contradicting evidence?
- Can you put forward a different interpretation of evidence?

You can use signal phrases in your paper to alert readers that you're about to present an objection. It's usually best to put this phrase at the beginning of a paragraph such as:

- Researchers have challenged these claims with…
- Critics argue that this view…
- Some readers may point to…

PUTTING INDUCTIVE REASONING TO THE TEST

Inductive reasoning, a way of thinking that makes sense of things by making specific observations and then drawing broad conclusions based on those observations, is a great way to come to a probable conclusion. Ask three simple questions of the evidence you're using to back up your conclusion, and you can see if your argument is supported by inductive reasoning.

1. Is the evidence sufficient?
2. Does the evidence reflect the characteristics of all the individuals involved?
3. Is the evidence relevant to your topic?

MOST COMMON EVIDENCE USED BY AUTHORS

HUMANITIES: LITERATURE, ART, FILM, MUSIC, PHILOSOPHY

- Critical essays that analyze other original works
- Details from an image, a film, or other work of art
- Passages from a musical composition
- Passages of text, including poetry

HUMANITIES: HISTORY

- Primary Sources (photos, letters, maps, official documents, etc.)
- Other books or articles that interpret primary sources or other evidence.

SOCIAL SCIENCES: PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, POLITICAL SCIENCE, ANTHROPOLOGY

- Books or articles that interpret data and results from other people's original experiments or studies.
- Results from field research (including interviews, surveys, observations, etc.)
- Data from their own experiments
- Statistics

SCIENCES: BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS

- Data from their own experiments
- Books or articles that interpret data and results from other people's original experiments or studies.

RESEARCHING

KEYWORD SEARCHING: DO IT BETTER!

What do you do if the results you want aren't coming up when you keyword search the web or a database? Here are a few helpful tips:

- Searching a phrase? Put it in quotation marks: "textbook affordability" will get you results for that exact phrase.
- Searching for two terms that you think are topically related? Use AND (or +) to connect them: education AND racism, or, education + racism, will only bring up results that include both terms
- Searching for a term that's commonly associated with a topic you don't want to learn about? Use NOT (or -) in front of the keyword you don't want results from: articles NOT magazines, or, articles – magazines, will bring up results that are about articles, but exclude any results that also include the term magazines.
- Want to get back as many results on a topic as possible? Use * at the end of a word for any letters that might vary: smok*, will bring up results that include the term smoke, smoking, and smokers.

IS THIS SOURCE SCHOLARLY?

What is a 'scholarly' or 'peer reviewed' source? A scholarly source is any material that has been produced by an expert in their field, reviewed by other experts in that field, and published for an audience also highly involved in that field. A source is scholarly if the following are true:

- The source is written with formal language and presented formally
- The author(s) of the source have an academic background (scientist, professor, etc.).
- The source includes a bibliography documenting the works cited in the source
- The source includes original work and analysis, rather than just summary of what's already out there
- The source includes evidence from primary sources
- The source includes a description of the author(s) methods of research.

EVALUATING SOURCES

BIAS

Do a background check on the author and publisher of the material. Do they support a particular political or religious view that could be affecting their objectivity in the piece? If they are associated with a special-interest group (i.e. the American Library Association or Keep America Safe), this might also be an indication of bias, unless alternative views are presented and addressed with appropriate respect.

ASSESS THE ARGUMENT

Identify the author's main claim. What are they arguing is true or untrue? Pay attention to what the author uses to support their claim – do you find relevant evidence or just emotional examples? Statistics should be used consistently and fairly, with an explanation of where they came from. Check for logical fallacies in the author's argument and make sure the author considers opposing viewpoints.

EVALUATING WEB SOURCES

AUTHOR

Most reputable websites will list or cite an author, even though you might have to dig into the site deeper than just the section you're interested in to find it. Most pages will have a home page or "About Us"/"About This Site" link where an author will be credited.

Once you find the name of the author, see what else you can find out about them, including their background in the area they are writing about. If these author's qualifications are not listed on the site itself, search on author sites or in other sources.

SPONSORSHIP

The sponsor of the site, the person or organization who is footing the bill, will often be listed in the same place as the copyright date or author information. If you can't find an explicit listing for a sponsor, double check the URL: .com indicates a commercial site, .edu an educational one, .org a nonprofit, .gov a government sponsor, .mil a military sponsor, or .net a network of sponsors. The end part of a URL may also tell you what country the website is coming from, such as .uk for the United Kingdom or .de for Germany.

PURPOSE

Determine why the site was created and who it was meant to

inform. For example, is it a website that was created to sell things, or a page hoping to persuade voters to take a side on a particular issue?

RELEVANCE

Depending on the information you are using, the currency of the site could be vital. Check the bottom of the webpage for the date of publication or the date of the latest update. Most of the links on the site should also still work – if they no longer do, that may be a sign the site is too out of date to be useful.

WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR A CITATION?

This is a general list of the information you *might* need to create a complete citation. Depending on the citation style you are using, different information may be required for each of these sources (see the section on MLA/APA/CMS for more information on citation styles).

FOR BOOKS

- Author(s)
- Editors/translators
- Edition (if not first)
- Name, date, and city of publication/publisher

FOR ARTICLES

- Author(s)
- Title and Subtitle
- Name of source (magazine, journal, newspaper, etc.)
- Date of publication
- Volume, issue, and page numbers

If retrieved from a database, also...

- Name of database

- Name of subscription service
- URL of database
- DOI (Digital Object Identifier)
- Date source retrieved

FOR THE WEB

- Author(s)
- Editors/Creators
- Title of source
- Title of site
- Publication information
- Date of publication or latest update
- Site sponsor
- Date source accessed
- Source URL

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

This chart follows MLA style. For information on other styles see those sections (APA and CMS).

Using something word-for-word from another source?	Put quotation marks around the excerpt, use a signal phrase, and include a parenthetical citation with the page number: *McGuffin and Cross have said, "No one should ever eat cake without frosting" (22).* Or *Cake, according to McGuffin and Cross, is one of those foods that should never be eaten "without frosting" (22).*
Using something word-for-word from another source but changing word forms or adding words to improve clarity and flow?	Put quotation marks around the excerpt, and put brackets around the segments you have changed. Include a signal phrase and a parenthetical citation with the page number: *McGuffin and Cross seem to think that "…eat[ing] cake without frosting" should never be allowed (22).*
Paraphrasing or summarizing the author's ideas without using the author's exact words?	Use a signal phrase and include a parenthetical citation with the page number: *According to McGuffin and Cross, cake is one of those special foods that require an additive to be properly enjoyed, like frosting (22).*
Using something from a source but substituting in some synonyms?	DON'T. This is plagiarism, even if you use a signal phrase and include a parenthetical citation.

QUOTATIONS

1. All quoted material should be enclosed in quotations marks unless set off from the rest of the text.
2. Quoted material should be accurate word-for-word. If anything was changed, brackets or ellipsis marks should indicated where the changes/omissions took place.
3. A clear signal phrase should alert your readers for each quotation and tell them why the quotation is there.
4. A parenthetical citation should follow each quotation.
5. Each quotation must be put in context.

SUMMARIES (PARAPHRASING)

1. Any summaries of the text should not include plagiarized wording.
2. Summaries must be followed by parenthetical citations.
3. A signal phrase should let your readers know where the summarized material begins as well as tell them why the summary is included in your paper.

STATISTICS & FACTS

1. Any facts that are not common knowledge must have a parenthetical citation included in your paper.
2. Use a signal phrase to help your reader understand why the facts are being cited, unless it is clear enough without one.

MLA/APA/CMS

WHAT IS MLA, APA, AND CMS?

MLA stands for Modern Language Association. It is a style of formatting academic papers that is used mostly in the arts and humanities.

APA stands for American Psychological Association, the professional guild who first developed the guidelines of the style. APA is a style of formatting academic papers that is used mostly in the social sciences.

CMS stands for the Chicago Manual of Style. It is a style of formatting written works that is most widely used in publishing.

MLA SIGNAL PHRASES

Keep things interesting for your readers by switching up the language and placement of your signal phrases.

MODEL PHRASES

In the words of professors Greer and Dewey, "…"

As sociology scholar Janice Kinsey has noted, "…"

Creative Commons, an organization that helps internet users understand and create copyright for materials, reports that "…"

"…," writes Deidre Tyrell, "…"

"…," attorney Sanderson claims.

Kyles and Sanderson offer up a compelling point: "…"

VERBS

Acknowledges	Contends	Observes
Admits	Declares	Points out
Adds	Denies	Reasons
Agrees	Disputes	Refutes
Argues	Emphasizes	Rejects
Asserts	Endorses	Reports
Believes	Grants	Responds
Claims	Illustrates	Suggests

Comments	Implies	Thinks
Compares	Insists	Writes
Confirms	Notes	

MLA CITATION EXAMPLES

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

In-text citations in MLA style are sometimes called parenthetical citations. An in-text citation is used to let the reader of your work know that an outside source contributed to your writing of a particular phrase, idea, or argument. In-text citations need to be used following every direct quotation and paraphrase/summary that you write.

IN-TEXT CITATION FOR SOURCE WITH KNOWN AUTHOR

These citations need to include the author's last name and the page/paragraph number on which the information was found. If a signal phrase is used earlier in the sentence which includes the author's name, the name does not need to be included in the citation.

> Stephen Hawking describes the climate at Oxford while he was studying there as "very anti-work" (33).
>
> The climate at Oxford during his studies is described as "very anti-work" (Hawking 33).

IN-TEXT CITATION FOR SOURCE WITH UNKNOWN AUTHOR

These citations need to include the title or shortened title of the work and the page/paragraph number on which the information was found.

IN-TEXT CITATION FOR SOURCE WITH MULTIPLE AUTHORS

These citations need to include the authors' last names and the page/paragraph number on which the information was found. If a signal phrase is used earlier in the sentence which includes the authors' last names, the names do not need to be included in the citation. If the source has three or fewer authors, all the authors' last names need to be listed in the citation.

> While some suggest that transgender individuals should rely on law enforcement for protection it's reported that "police often participate in the intimidation themselves rather than providing protection" ("Fighting Anti-Trans Violence" 2).

> Ishiguro, Garcia, and Schmidt suggest that more scientific research is needed before a conclusion between cause and effect can be drawn (198).
>
> "More scientific research needs to be completed before any conclusions about causation can be drawn" (Ishiguro, Garcia, and Schmidt 198).

If the source has more than three authors, only the first author's last name needs to be listed in the citation, followed by the phrase 'et al'.

WORKS CITED ENTRIES

WORKS CITED ENTRY FOR BOOK/PRINT SOURCE WITH KNOWN AUTHOR

Last name, First name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of Publication.

Ip, Greg. *The Little Book of Economics*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010. Book.

WORKS CITED ENTRY FOR AN ARTICLE IN A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication.

Belzer, Alisa. "From Heroic Victims To Competent Comrades: Views Of Adult Literacy Learners In The

De Walle et al. suggest that mainstream scientists and media organizations have ulterior motives when it comes to conducting such research (231).

The scientists involved in these studies have suggested that mainstream scientists and media organizations may have ulterior motives when it comes to conducting such research (De Walle et al. 231).

Research Literature." *Adult Education Quarterly*. 65.3 (2015): 250-266. Web.

WORKS CITED ENTRY FOR A WEBPAGE

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). "Page Title." *Name of Website*. Name of publisher, date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.

Ravenscraft, Eric. "How to Change Your Car's Oil." *Lifehacker*. Lifehacker, 1 August 2014. Web. 24 June 2016.

APA SIGNAL PHRASES

Keep things interesting for your readers by switching up the language and placement of your signal phrases.

MODEL PHRASES

In the words of Peterson (2012), "…"

As Johnson and Allen (2006) have noted, "…"

Einstein and Yvanovich (1956), researchers in physics, pointed out that, "…"

"…," claimed Carter (1998).

"…," wrote Dietrich (2002), "…"

Linguists McAllen et al. (2015) have compiled an impressive amount of data for this argument: "…"

Harrison (2007) answered these criticisms with the following rebuttal: "…"

VERBS

Admitted	Contended	Reasoned
Agreed	Declared	Refuted
Argued	Denied	Rejected
Asserted	Emphasized	Reported
Believed	Insisted	Responded

Claimed	Noted	Suggested
Compared	Observed	Thought
Confirmed	Pointed out	Wrote

APA CITATION EXAMPLES

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

An in-text citation is used to let the reader of your work know that an outside source contributed to your writing of a particular phrase, idea, or argument. In-text citations need to be used following every direct quotation and paraphrase/summary that you write.

IN-TEXT CITATION FOR SOURCE WITH KNOWN AUTHOR

These citations need to include the author's last name, date that the information was published, and the page (p.) /paragraph (para.) number on which you found the information. If a signal phrase is used earlier in the sentence which includes the author's name, the name does not need to be included in the citation.

> Stephen Hawking (2013) describes the climate at Oxford while he was studying there as "very anti-work" (p. 33).
>
> The climate at Oxford during his studies is described as "very anti-work" (Hawking, 2013, p. 33).

IN-TEXT CITATION FOR SOURCE WITH UNKNOWN AUTHOR

These citations need to include the title or shortened title of the work in either the signal phrase or in the citation itself, the date when the information was published, and the page/paragraph number on which the information was found. Titles of books and reports are italicized or underlined; titles of articles, chapters, and web pages are in quotation marks.

IN-TEXT CITATION FOR SOURCE WITH MULTIPLE AUTHORS

These citations need to include the authors' last names, the date when the information was published, and the page/paragraph number on which the information was found. If a signal phrase is used earlier in the sentence which includes the authors' last names, the names do not need to be included in the citation. If the source has two authors, both authors' last names need to be listed in the citation.

If the source has three – five authors, all the authors' last names need to be used in either a signal phrase or in the citation the

> In "Fighting Anti-Trans Violence" (2015), readers are told that while some suggest that transgender individuals should rely on law enforcement for protection, "police often participate in the intimidation themselves rather than providing protection" (para. 2).
>
> While some suggest that transgender individuals should rely on law enforcement for protection it's reported that "police often participate in the intimidation themselves rather than providing protection" ("Fighting Anti-Trans Violence", 2015, para. 2).

first time the source is cited. After the first citation, only the first author's last name followed by "et al." should be used.

If the source has six or more authors, you only need to use the first author's last name in either a signal phrase or in the citation.

Research by Ishiguro and Garcia (2009), suggest that more scientific study is needed before a conclusion between cause and effect can be drawn (p. 198).

"More scientific research needs to be completed before any conclusions about causation can be drawn" (Ishiguro & Garcia, 2009, p. 198).

De Walle, Schmidt, and Lisowski (2010) assert that mainstream scientists and media organizations have ulterior motives when it comes to conducting such research (p. 231).

The scientists involved in these studies have suggested that mainstream scientists and media organizations may have ulterior motives when it comes to conducting such research (De Walle, Schmidt, & Lisowski, 2010, p. 231).

However, De Walle et al. (2010) could not provide adequate evidence for this assertion (p. 233).

However, adequate evidence for this assertion could not be provided (De Walle et al., 2010 p. 233).

WORKS CITED ENTRIES

WORKS CITED ENTRY FOR BOOK/PRINT SOURCE WITH KNOWN AUTHOR

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Location: Publisher.

> Ip, G. (2010). *The little book of economics*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

WORKS CITED ENTRY FOR AN ARTICLE IN A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article.*Title of Journal, volume number,* page range. doi: 0000000/000000000000 or http://dx.doi.org/10.0000/0000

> Belzer, A., & Shapka J. (2015). From heroic victims to competent comrades: Views of adult literacy learners in the research literature. *Adult Education Quarterly, 65.3*, 250-266. Doi: 10.1177/0741713615580015

> Willig et al. (1998) were the first group of researchers to take the issue seriously and perform in-depth research to identify potential negative effects of such events (p. 52).
>
> The first group of researchers to take the issue seriously and perform in-depth research to identify potential negative effects of such events found some disturbing trends (Willig et al., 1998, p. 52).

WORKS CITED ENTRY FOR A WEBPAGE

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). *Title of document*. Retrieved from http://Web address

Ravenscraft, E. (2014, August 1). *How to change your car's oil*. Retrieved from http://lifehacker.com/how-to-change-your-cars-oil-1598482301

CMS SIGNAL PHRASES

Keep things interesting for your readers by switching up the language and placement of your signal phrases.

MODEL PHRASES

In the words of geneticist Gregor Mendel, "…"1

As Derek Terrence Crab has argued, "…"2

In a letter to his brother, a Freedom Rider who witnessed the riots wrote that "…"3

"…," claims Benjamin Disraeli.4

"…," writes Albert Camus, "…"5

Mary Shelly offers an intriguing interpretation: "…"6

VERBS

Admits	Contends	Reasons
Agrees	Declares	Refutes
Argues	Denies	Rejects
Asserts	Emphasizes	Reports
Believes	Insists	Responds
Claims	Notes	Suggests
Compares	Observes	Thinks
Confirms	Points out	Writes

BASIC GRAMMAR

INTRODUCING... SUBORDINATE CLAUSES!

There are three different kinds of subordinate clauses: adverb clauses, adjective clauses, and noun clauses. Each of these clauses are introduced by certain words. These words are listed below.

INTRODUCING ADVERB CLAUSES

After	Though	Though
Although	If	Unless
As	In order that	Until
As if	Since	When
Because	So that	Where
Before	Than	Whether
Even	That	While

These are all subordinating conjunctions.

INTRODUCING ADJECTIVE CLAUSES

That	Who	Whose
Which	Whom	

These are all relative pronouns.

When	Where	Why

These are all relative adverbs.

INTRODUCING NOUN CLAUSES

That	Who	Whose
Which	Whom	

These are all relative pronouns.

What	Whichever	Whomever
Whatever	Whoever	

These are all other pronouns.

How	Whenever	Whether
If	Where	Why
When	Wherever	

These are all other subordinating words.

GRAMMATICAL SENTENCES

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

PRESENT TENSE FORMS OF *WANT* AND *RELAX*

	Singular		Plural	
First Person	I	want	We	want
Second Person	You	want	You	want
Third Person	He/she/it	wants	They	want

	Singular		Plural	
First Person	I	relax	We	relax
Second Person	You	relax	You	relax
Third Person	He/she/it	relaxes	They	relax

Examples: I want to eat an ice cream. They relax visibly.

PRESENT TENSE FORMS OF *HAVE*

	Singular		Plural	
First Person	I	have	We	have
Second Person	You	have	You	have
Third Person	He/she/it	has	They	have

Examples: You have my full attention. It has very bad breath!

PRESENT TENSE FORMS OF *DO/DON'T*

	Singular		Plural	
First Person	I	do/don't	We	do/don't

Second Person	You	do/don't	You	do/don't
Third Person	He/she/it	does/doesn't	They	do/don't

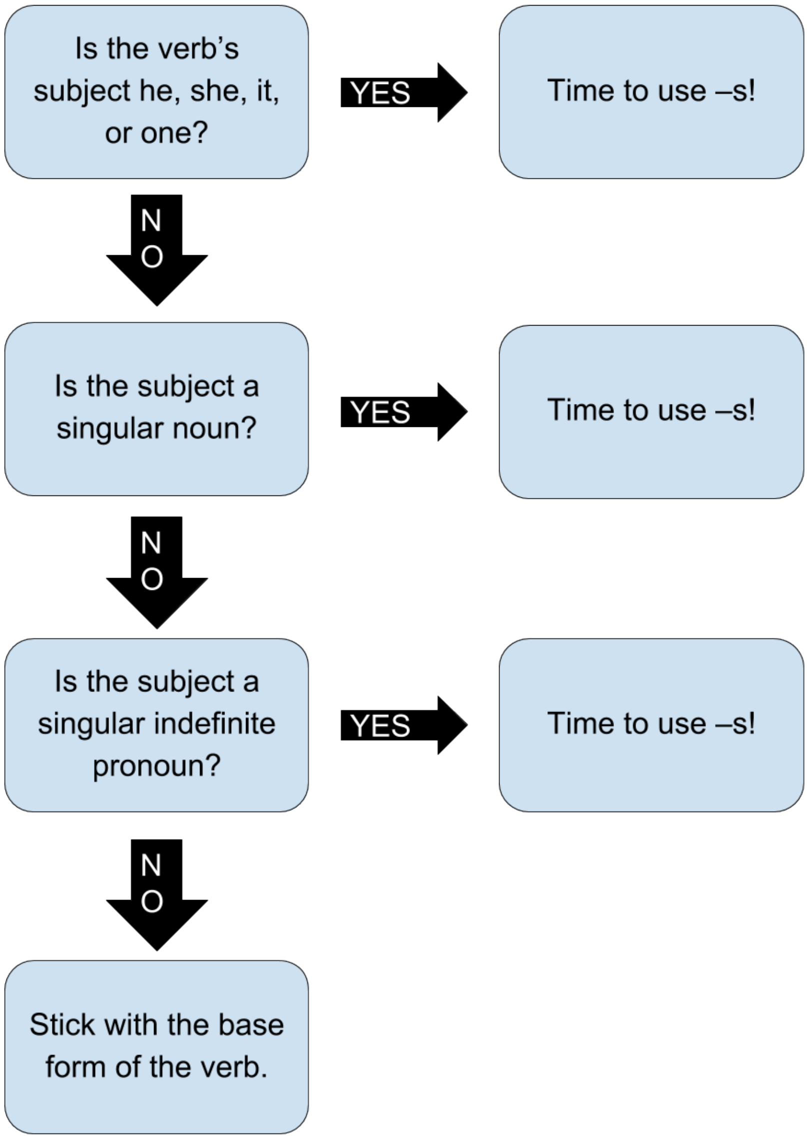
Examples: She doesn't like to wear dresses. We do our own homework.

PRESENT TENSE FORMS OF *BE*

	Singular		Plural	
First Person	I	am/was	We	are/were
Second Person	You	are/were	You	are/were
Third Person	He/she/it	is/was	They	are/were

Examples: We are learning so much today! I was lost before!

SHOULD YOU USE –S (OR –ES) FOR A PRESENT-TENSE VERB?



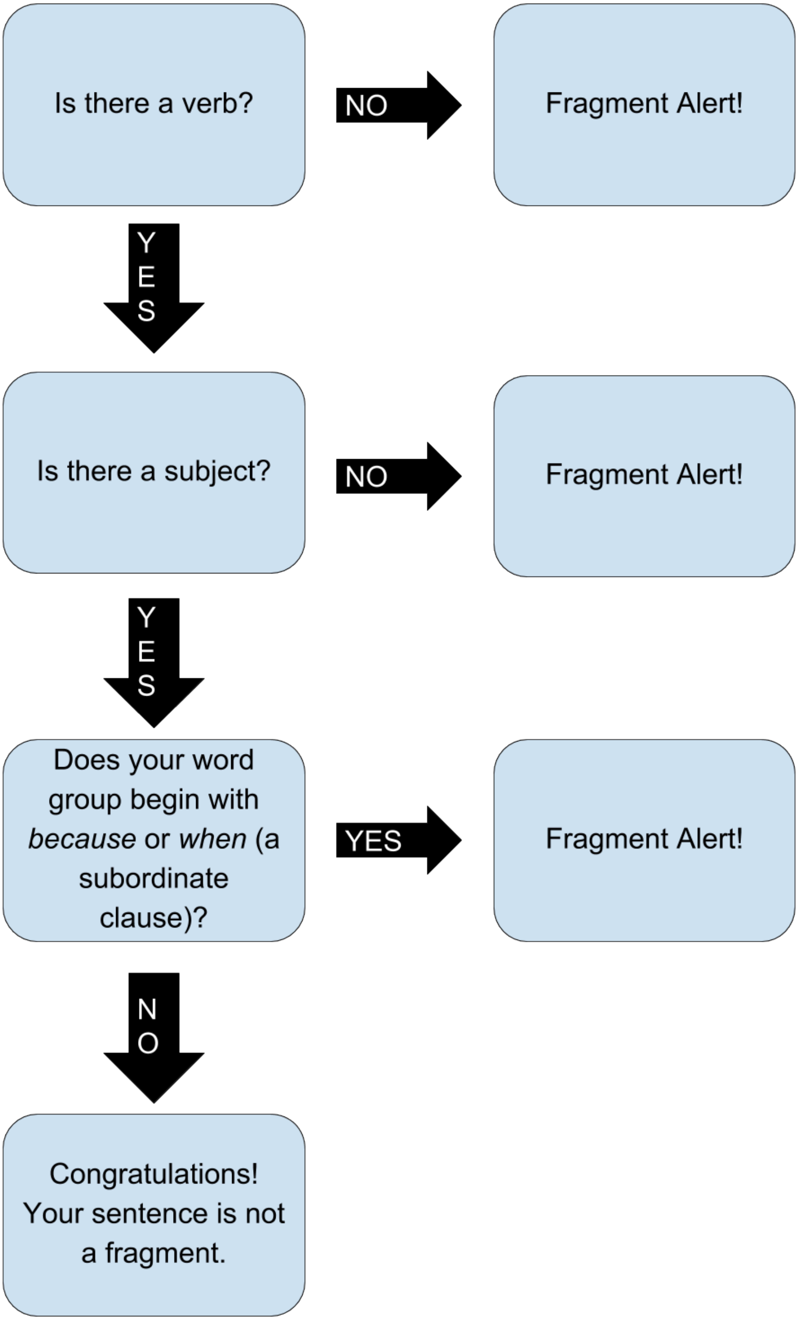
EXAMPLES

Verb's subject is he, she, it, or one: He loves going to watch musical theater.

Verb's subject is a singular noun: A parent wants the best for their child.

Verb's subject a singular indefinite pronoun: Everybody swims in the lake during the summer.

IS YOUR SENTENCE A FRAGMENT?


Is there a verb?
NO
Fragment Alert!
YES
Is there a subject?
NO
Fragment Alert!
YES
Does your word group begin with *because* or *when* (a subordinate clause)?
YES
Fragment Alert!
NO
Congratulations! Your sentence is not a fragment.

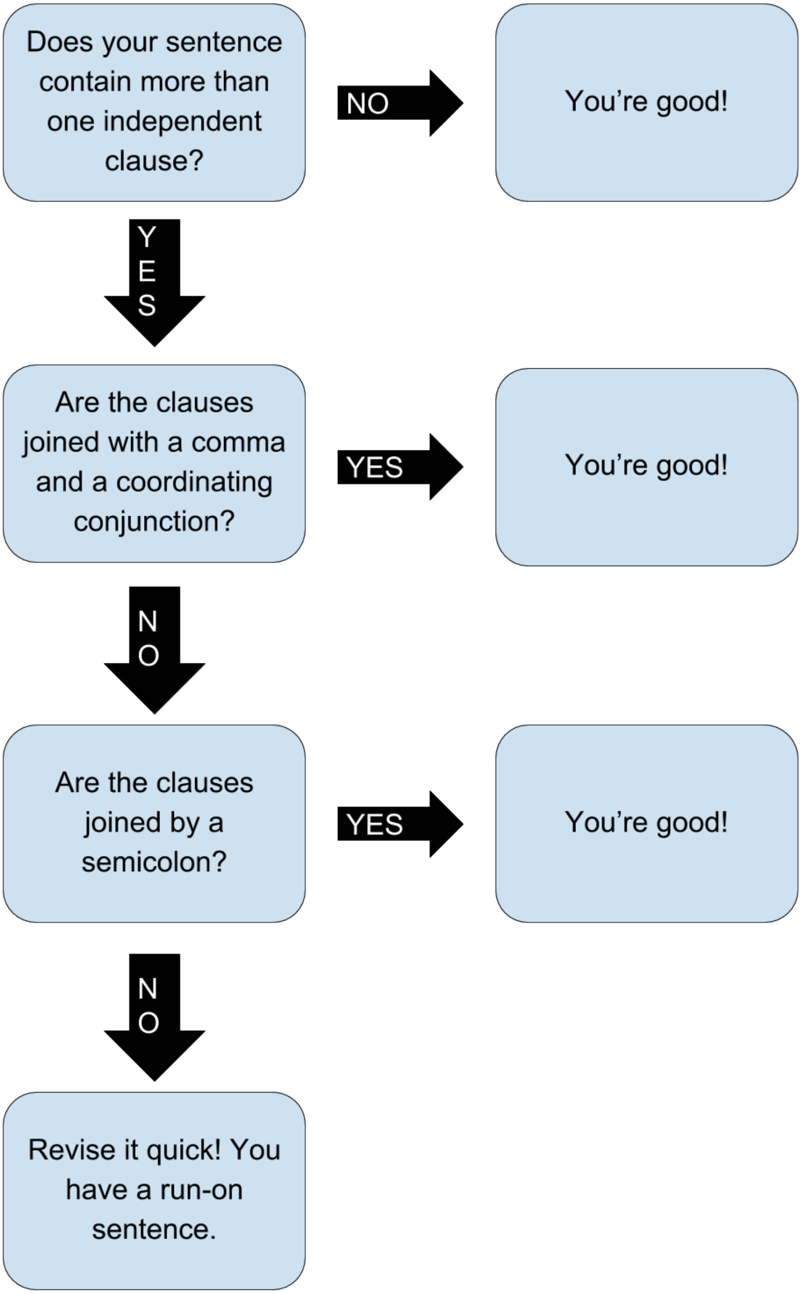
EXAMPLES

No Verb: A movie with pointless twists. **VS.** The movie **has** pointless twists.

No subject: For not doing her own homework, Missy was expelled. **VS. Missy was expelled** for not doing her own homework.

Beginning with Subordinate Clause: Because the band didn't know the street address, the party was impossible to find. **VS.** The band couldn't find the party **because** no one knew the address.

IS YOUR SENTENCE A RUN-ON?


Does your sentence contain more than one independent clause?
NO
You're good!
YES
Are the clauses joined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction?
YES
You're good!
NO
Are the clauses joined by a semicolon?
YES
You're good!
NO
Revise it quick! You have a run-on sentence.

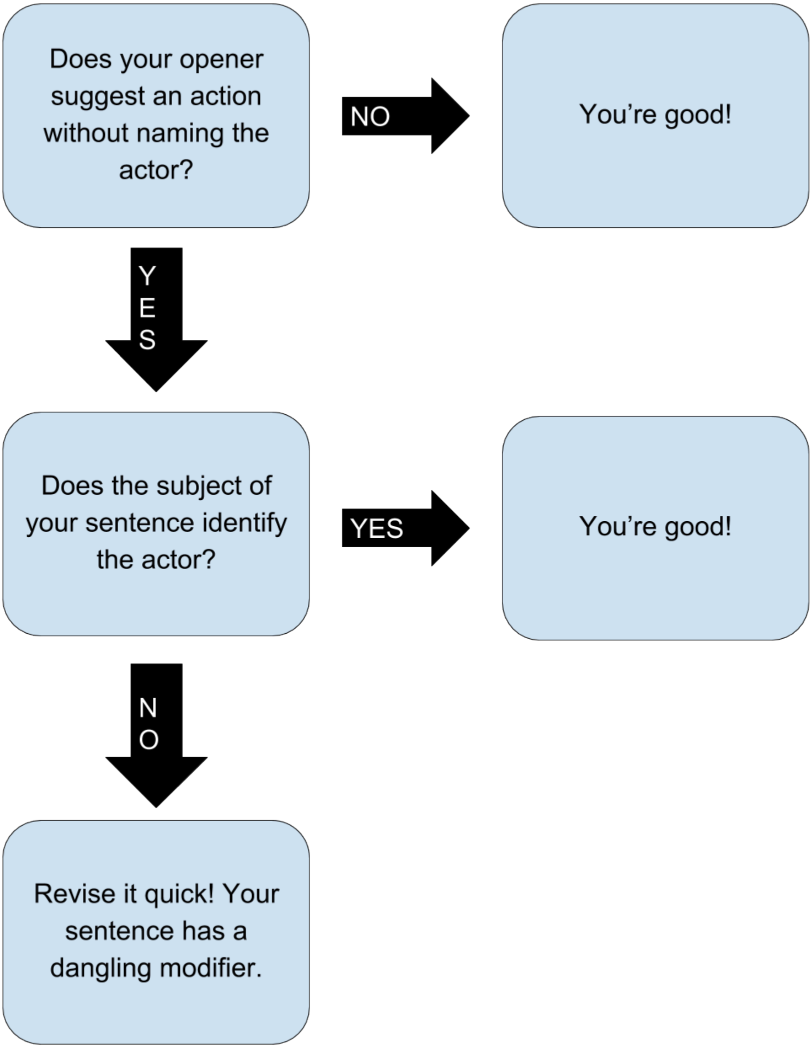
EXAMPLES

Run-On Sentence: We've learned so much about grammar already how am I going to remember it all?

Fix with a comma and conjunctions: We've learned so much about grammar already, and I'm worried about how I'm going to remember it all.

Fix with a semicolon: We've learned so much about grammar already; how am I going to remember it all?

DOES YOUR SENTENCE HAVE A DANGLING MODIFIER?



EXAMPLES

Sentence with dangling modifier	Correct sentence
Having finished setting up the tables, the party started.	Having finished setting up the tables, the seniors could finally start the party.
Without knowing the street address, it was impossible to find the party.	Because the band didn't know the street address, the party was impossible to find.
To improve his results, the placement test was taken again.	Jake improved his results by taking the placement test again.

MULTILINGUAL WRITERS AND ESL CHALLENGES

VERB FORMS: THE BASICS

	Regular Verb – *Relax*	Irregular Verb – Sing	Irregular Verb – Be
Base Form	*Relax*	*Sing*	*Be*
Past Tense	*Relaxed*	*Sang*	*Was, were*
Past Participle	*Relaxed*	*Sung*	*Been*
Present Participle	*Relaxing*	*Singing*	*Being*
-s Form	*Relaxes*	*Sings*	*Is*

VERB TENSES: ACTIVE VOICE

SIMPLE TENSES

SIMPLE PRESENT

General facts, states of being, scheduled events in the future, and repeated actions
=
base form or –s form

Examples

- Teachers often *grade* late into the night.
- Water *becomes* ice at 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Celebrities *donate* to hundreds of charities every year.
- The plane *departs* tonight at 9:00 p.m.

SIMPLE PAST

Completed actions from the past that occurred at a specific time or facts/states of being that occurred in the past
=
base form + -ed/-d/irregular form

Examples

- Their neighbors *worked* together to rebuild the house.
- He *drove* across country to prove a point.
- When she *was* young, my sister *played* with me all the time.

SIMPLE FUTURE

Future actions, predictions, or promises
=
will + base form

Examples

- I *will eat* in a few minutes.
- The rain *will stop* any second now.

SIMPLE PROGRESSIVE FORMS

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

Actions that are happening right now, but not happening forever or future actions
=
am, is, are + present participle

Examples

- The teachers *are meeting* in the boardroom. Josie *is meeting* the principal.

- We *are baking* cookies tomorrow.

PAST PROGRESSIVE

Actions that happened at a specific time in the past or past plans that didn't happen
=
was, were/was going to, were going to + present participle

Examples

- They *were sailing* when the hurricane hit.
- I *was going to fly* out tonight, but couldn't get a ticket.

PERFECT TENSES

PRESENT PERFECT

Repetitive or constant actions that began in the past but are still happening or actions that happened at an unspecified time in the past
=
has, have + past participle

Examples

- I *have loved* dogs since I was a child.
- Alex *has lived* in the UK for over a year.
- Stephanie *has bought* three cars in three years.

PAST PERFECT

Actions that occurred/began before something else in the past
=
had + past participle

Example

- He *had* just *choked* when the ambulance drove by.

PERFECT PROGRESSIVE FORMS

PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

Continuous actions that began in the past but are still occurring
=
has, have + been + past participle

Example

- Ygritte *has been trying* to learn knitting for years.

PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

Actions that began and continued in the past until some other action in the past occurred
=
had + been + present participle

Example

- By the time I moved to Klamath Falls, I *had been writing* for ten years.

VERB TENSES: PASSIVE VOICE

SIMPLE TENSES

SIMPLE PRESENT

General facts or habitual repetitive actions
=
am, is, are + past participle

Examples

- Lunch *is served* at noon.
- The locks *are checked* every night.

SIMPLE PAST

Completed past actions
=
was, were + past participle

Example

- She *was rewarded* for her information.

SIMPLE FUTURE

Future promises, predictions, or actions
=
will be + past participle

Example

- I *will be there* on Saturday.

SIMPLE PROGRESSIVE

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

Future actions (paired with go, leave, move, etc.) or actions that are currently in progress
=
am, is, are + being + past participle

Examples

- The votes *are being counted* by impartial volunteers.
- Joe *is being crowned* king of the dance.

PAST PROGRESSIVE

Actions that were in progress at a specific time past
=
was, were + being + past participle

Example

- They thought they *were being careful.*

PERFECT TENSES

PRESENT PERFECT

Actions that happened at an unspecified time in the past or that begin in the past but are still currently occurring
=
has, have + been + past participle

Examples

- The boat *has been delayed* because of the hurricane in the Atlantic.
- Tests *have been proctored* by teachers for many years.

PAST PERFECT

Actions that began or occurred before something else in the past
=
had + been + past participle

Example

- She *had been searching* for clues for hours before bedtime.

NOTE: Future progressive, future perfect, & perfect progressive are not used in passive voice.

THE MEANING OF MODALS

CAN

General ability in the present to do something, or an informal request or permission granted.

Examples

- I *can write* a grammar book. George *can sing* better than his brother.
- *Can* I *have* the last cookie? Megan *can use* my book.

COULD

General ability in the past to do something, or an informal request or permission granted.

Examples

- Lester *could play* the piano when he was five.
- *Could* you *pass* the salt?

MAY

A formal request or permission granted, or a possibility, something that could or could not happen.

Examples

- *May* I *go* to the bathroom? Students *may* use a calculator on the test.
- I *may go see* the movie tonight, or I *may wake up* early tomorrow to *see* it.

MIGHT

A possibility, something that could or could not happen. Usually stronger possibility than may.

Example

- The library *might allow* students to bring in food.

MUST

Something that is a necessity either in the present or the future, a strong possibility, or a near certainty in the present or past.

Examples

- For the best result, you *must mix* the batter for five minutes.
- Andrew *must be* late.
- You *must have left* the tickets in the car.

SHOULD

Suggestions or advice, obligations or duties, or expectations.

Examples

- Everyone *should drink* water every day.
- The teacher *should protect* your personal information.
- Your food *should arrive* soon.

WILL

A certainty, request, or promise.

Examples

- If you don't go to sleep now, you *will regret* it tomorrow.
- *Will* you *go to* Miranda's party with me?
- Jamie *will plan* the wedding.

WOULD

Polite requests or repeated actions in the past.

Examples

- *Would* you *help* me finish this pie? I *would like* some milk.
- Whenever Elias needed help with writing, he *would visit* his professor.

NOUNS

COMMON

Common nouns are words that name general persons, places, or things, and they begin with lowercase letters.

Examples
school, ignorance, sunshine, teacher, city

PROPER

Proper nouns are words that name *specific* persons, places, or things, and they being with capital letters.

Examples
Mazama High School, Robin, Japan, President Obama, Lincoln Memorial, Enlightenment

COUNT

Count nouns are common nouns that name general persons, places, or things that can be counted, either singularly or plural.

Examples

boy, boys OR town, towns OR pigeon, pigeons OR religion, religions

NON-COUNT

Non-count nouns are common nouns that name things or ideas that can't be counted or made plural.

Examples

gold, rain, gravel, goodness, ignorance, air

SINGULAR

Singular nouns are any nouns that represent only one person, place, or thing.

Examples

purse, county, man, failure, Amazon River, Albatross Island

PLURAL

Plural nouns are count nouns that represent several persons, places, or things.

Examples

purses, counties, men, Cascade Mountains, Canary Islands

SPECIFIC (DEFINITE)

Specific (or definite) nouns are words that name people, places, or things that can be identified within a group of the same type.

Examples

- *The students* in *Professor Alan's class* are very bright.
- *The train* carrying *the President* was an hour early.
- *The books* in *the car* were damaged.

GENERAL (INDEFINITE)

General (or indefinite) nouns are words that name categories of people, places, or things, and are often plural.

Examples

- *Teachers* should grade.
- *Plays* help *people* connect.
- *The subway* has made commuting between *libraries* easy.

ARTICLES FOR COMMON NOUNS

Use *the* if a reader could identify the noun specifically.

Examples

- Please turn off *the lights*. We're not going to *the museum* tomorrow. (Count)
- *The food* throughout Korea is excellent (Non-count)

Use *a/an* if the noun refers to a single item that is not specific. Never use *a/an* with plural or non-count nouns.

Example

- Bring *an eraser* to class. You'll be using *a pencil* to write an essay today. (Count)

Use a quantifier such as *enough, many, some,* etc. if the noun represents and unspecified amount and that amount is more than one but not all.

Examples

- Amanda showed us *some souvenirs* of her trip to New Orleans. *Many birds* go there in the summer. (Count)
- We didn't get *enough snow* this winter.

Use no article if the noun represents all items in a category or the category in general.

Examples

- *Teachers* can attend the game for free. *Actors* must report backstage by 5:00 p.m. (Count)
- *Gold* is a natural resource.

NON-COUNT NOUNS

FOOD

Beef	Cheese	Rice
Bread	Cream	Salt
Butter	Meat	Sugar
Candy	Milk	Water
Cereal	Pasta	Wine

NONFOOD

Air	Paper	Soap
Cement	Petroleum	Steel
Coal	Plastic	Wood
Dirt	Rain	Wool
Gasoline	Silver	
Gold	Snow	

ABSTRACT

Advice	Fun	Knowledge
Anger	Happiness	Love
Beauty	Health	Poverty
Confidence	Honesty	Satisfaction
Courage	Information	Wealth
Employment	Intelligence	

OTHER

Biology	Machinery	Scenery
Clothing	Mail	Traffic
Equipment	Money	Transportation
Furniture	News	Violence
Homework	Poetry	Weather
Jewelry	Pollution	Work
Luggage	Research	

GEOGRAPHY AND 'THE'

With geographic nouns, sometimes you use 'the' and sometimes you don't. Confusing, right? No longer:

DON'T USE 'THE'

Single Mountains or Islands

Examples
Mount Hood, Madagascar

Most Countries and Continents

Examples
France, Algeria, North Korea, Australia, Antarctica

Streets, Squares, and Parks

Examples
Linden Street, Madison Square, Yosemite National Park

Bays, Single Lakes

Examples
Honolulu Bay, Lake Michigan

Cities, States, and Counties

Examples
Reno, Florida, Howard County

USE 'THE'

Groups of Islands

Example
the British Isles

Canals and Rivers

Examples
the Suez Canal, the Mississippi

Peninsulas

Examples

the Arabian Peninsula, the Iberian Peninsula

Country Names with *of* phrase

Examples

the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of South Korea

Mountain Ranges

Examples

the Cascades, the Andes

Oceans, Seas, and Gulfs

Examples

the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico

Large Regions and Deserts

Examples

the West Coast, the Gobi

HOW TO ORDER CUMULATIVE ADJECTIVES

1. Article (or other Noun Marker) – *a, an, the, her, this, my Joe's, two, many, some*
2. Evaluative Word – *repulsive, lazy, gross, beautiful, magical*
3. Size – *miniscule, small, large, gargantuan*
4. Length/Shape – *short, oval, long, diamond*
5. Age – *new, young, old, ancient*
6. Color – *orange, cerulean, red*
7. Nationality – *German, Chilean, Korean*
8. Material – *pewter, wood, silk, granite*
9. Noun/Adjective – *safe (as in safe* room), *mobile (as in mobile* home)

Example

- My collection includes ten large new figurines.

THREE MAGIC WORDS: AT, ON, AND IN

These three words can help you show either time *or* place.

Time	Place
At 12:45, *at* dusk, *at* sunrise	*At* the library, standing *at* the edge, walking *at* the signal, yelling 'Surprise!' *at* Sophie
On Friday, *on* our anniversary	*On* the fridge, the building *on* Sixth Street, *on* the stage
In the evening, *in* June, *in* 1990, tested *in* forty minutes	*In* the book, *in* Seattle, *in* my bedroom

COMBO TIME! – ADJECTIVES & PREPOSITIONS

Accustomed to	Guilty of
Addicted to	Interested in
Afraid of	Involved in
Angry with	Involved with
Ashamed of	Known as
Aware of	Known for
Committed to	Made of
Concerned about	Made from
Concerned with	Married to
Connected to	Opposed to
Covered with	Preferable to
Dedicated to	Proud of
Devoted to	Responsible for
Different from	Satisfied with
Engaged in	Scared of
Engaged to	Similar to
Excited about	Tired of
Familiar with	Worried about
Full of	

COMBO TIME! – VERBS & PREPOSITIONS

Agree with	Decide on	Respond to
Apply to	Depend on	Result in
Approve of	Differ from	Search for
Arrive at	Disagree with	Speak to
Arrive in	Dream about	Speak with
Ask for	Dream of	Stare at
Believe in	Feel like	Succeed at
Belong to	Forget about	Succeed in
Care about	Happen to	Take advantage of
Care for	Hope for	Take care of
Compare to	Insist on	Think about
Compare with	Listen to	Think of
Concentrate on	Participate in	Wait for
Consist of	Rely on	Wait on
Count on	Reply to	

REVISING

A STRATEGY FOR ANALYZING AND REVISING A FIRST DRAFT

Here are some steps for re-reading and revising your essays in a reasonably objective way. These steps may seem formulaic and mechanical, but you need a way to diagnose your own prose so that you have some sense of how others will read it.

FINDING YOUR BEST POINT — AND MAKING SURE YOUR READERS CAN FIND IT

This first step is intended to ensure that the beginning and end of your paper cohere with each other, that they "frame" your paper is an appropriate way.

1. Find the beginning and the end.

Draw a line after the end of your introduction and just before the beginning of your conclusion.

2. Find candidates for your point.

Underline one sentence in both your introduction and conclusion that comes closest to expressing your main point, your claim, the thesis of your paper. In your introduction, that sentence is most likely to be the last one; in your conclusion, it might be anywhere.

3. Find the best candidate.

Read the introduction and conclusion together, particularly comparing those two most important sentences. They should at least not contradict one another.

From an introduction:

> During this unprecedented period, African-American artists shared in the process of creating a black urban identity through their depictions of a culture's experience.

From a conclusion:

> While many were eager to slash the culture's ties to its primitive history, Armstrong and Motley created art which included elements of the community's history and which made this history a central part of African-American urban identity.

It is likely that the sentence in your conclusion will be more specific, more substantive, more thoughtful than the one in your introduction. Your introduction may merely announce a general intention to write about some topic. If so, your conclusion is more likely to make a more important claim, generalization, or point about that topic. In the example above, the sentence from the introduction describes only the fairly general idea that artists contributed to a culture's identity by depicting its experience. An important idea, certainly, but one that your readers probably already hold. An essay that did no more than reiterate it would not be especially valuable. Contrast the sentence from the conclusion. Here, the writer is more specific in several important ways. First, she is specific about one element in African-American experience: its ties to its primitive history. She is specific about what the artists did: they included aspects of that history in their art. She also adds the suggestive information that some people opposed including primitive history in African-American culture ("While many eager to slash the cultures ties . . . "). This controversy is potentially enriching for the essay because it may prompt the reader (and the writer) to analyze the subject from a very different perspective.

4. Revise your introduction to match the best point.

If you find that the sentence from your conclusion is more insightful than the one from your introduction, then you have to revise your introduction to make it seem that you had this sentence in mind all along (even though when you started drafting the paper you may have had no idea how you were going to end it). You can do this in one of two ways:

- Insert at the end of your introduction some version of that sentence in your conclusion that comes closest to expressing your main point. You may have to revise the rest of the introduction to make it fit.
- If you don't want to "give away" the point of your paper at the beginning, insert a sentence at the end of your introduction that at least anticipates your point by using some of its same language.

For example:

> As African-American artists such as Louis Armstrong and Archibald Motley, Jr. shared in the collective process of creating a black urban identity, they reflected their community's struggle to define the role of historical experience in modern culture.

Note that this sentence does not conclude that Armstrong and Motley did include primitive history in their art. But it does introduce some implicit questions that anticipate that conclusion: did these artists use their historical experience? If so, how? Those implicit question set up the explicit point.

How do you choose between stating your main point at the beginning of the essay or waiting to state it at the end? If you think you are a skilled writer, the second choice–the "point-last" strategy–is a possibility. You must be certain, though, that the rest of the paper plausibly takes your reader to your conclusion. (We'll talk more about that in a minute.) Point-last writing,

however, is always more difficult that point-first, and if you feel uncertain about your writing or more important, if you aren't interested in spending the extra time it takes to write good point-last prose, then you should state your main point explicitly at the end of your introduction. If you've stated your main point at the beginning of your essay, your reader won't lose track of your argument, won't lose the sense of where you are headed. More important, it will focus your attention on where you are headed. Don't worry that if you state your point first your professors will lose interest in your paper. If your point is interesting (or even if it's not), they will read on to see how you support it. (That, after all, is what you're paying them to do.)

There are, to be sure, some instructors, mostly but not exclusively in the humanities, who prefer point-last papers: papers that pose a problem in their introductions, then work toward a conclusion, demonstrating how the writer thought about the topic, wrestled with alternative answers, and finally discovered a solution. That kind of organization creates a dramatic tension that some instructors like, because they want to see the processes of your thinking.

The risk is that you might do exactly that! For nearly all of us, the process of our thinking is messy, inefficient, and hard to follow. If you write a paper that in fact tracks what you thought about at 1 AM, then 3 AM, the 6 AM, you're likely to write a messy, inefficient and hard to follow paper. Few instructors want to see that. They want to see a coherent, ordered, analytical account of your thinking that may seem to be a narrative, but in fact is always an artful invention, something that requires writing skills of a high order.

So when you go through this first phase of your analysis, you have to make a thoughtful choice about where you want to locate your point–in your introduction and your conclusion, or just in your conclusion, with an "anticipatory" point in your

introduction. The default choice for both writer and reader is the first: point-first.

CREATING COHERENT SECTIONS

Now you need to determine whether the parts of your paper hang together to form a coherent argument and whether the parts are in an order that will seem to make sense to your reader.

1. Find the paper's major sections.

Draw a line between every major section in your paper. A four or five page paper should have at least two and probably not more than three or four.

Now, analyze and revise each section as you did your whole paper:

2. Find each section's introduction and conclusion

Put a slash mark after the introduction to each section. The introduction to a section may be only one sentence or it may be a complete paragraph. Each section needs a sentence that tells your readers that they have finished one segment of your argument and are moving on to another.

Put a slash mark before the conclusion to each major section. If your sections are short–only a couple of paragraphs or less–that section might not need a separate conclusion.

3. Identify the major point in each section.

Just as your whole paper has to have a point, so should each section have a sentence that offers some generalization, some point, some claim that that section is intended to support.

If most of your points seem to be at the beginnings of your sections, fine. If most of them are at the ends of your sections as conclusions, you have to . . .

4. Think hard about whether you want any particular section to be point-last.

If you can think of no good reason, revise so that that section is point first. If you decide that you want the section to be point-last, then you'll have to repeat for the section the process we described for a point-last essay. You'll need to write an introductory sentence for the section that uses some of the key words that will appear in the point sentence that concludes the section. This principle simply reflects the needs of readers to know where they are and where they are going. Nothing confuses a reader more than moving from paragraph to paragraph with no sense of the logical progression of your argument. Such an essay feels like pudding with an occasional raisin to chew on, but not in any particular order.

5. Ordering the sections.

Try to explain to yourself why you put the parts of the paper in the order you did. If you arranged the parts of your paper in the order you did because that's the order in which they occurred to you, your readers are likely not to see any rationale for moving through your paper in the order they do.

- If you have three (or four, or whatever) reasons for something, why are the reasons in the order they are in? (By the way, beware of organization-by-number: ". . . for three reasons. First . . . Second . . . Third . . . "If the only relationship you can demonstrate among your arguments is "first-second-third," your essay will probably be perceived as unsophisticated. Most significant arguments have substantive relationships: they are related not merely by number but by content.)

- If you have ordered the parts of your paper from cause-to-effect, why did you do that? Why not effect-to-cause?

- If you organized your paper to echo the organization of the

text you are writing about, why have you done that? If you did, you risk having written a mere summary.

- If you organized your paper to match the terms of the assignment, is that what your instructor wanted, or did your instructor want something more original from you?

- If you organized your paper around major topics in your assignment ("Compare and contrast Freud and Jung in terms of the role of society in the development of their theories") did you write about, say, Freud first and Jung second simply because that was the order in the assignment?

There are so many principles of order that we cannot list them all here. We can only urge you to identify the one you chose and then to justify it as the best one from among the many possible.

ENSURING YOUR EVIDENCE FITS YOUR CLAIMS

The most common evidence you will offer to support your claims will be quotations from the texts you read and references to passages in them. Without such evidence, your claims are merely statements of opinion. As we said, you are entitled to your opinions but you're not entitled to having your readers agree with them. In fact, your readers generally will not highly value your opinions unless you provide some evidence to support them. When you provide evidence, you turn your opinions into arguments.

But before readers can value your claim as supported with evidence, they must first understand how your evidence counts as evidence for that claim. No flaw more afflicts the papers of less experienced writers than to make some sort of claim, or to offer a quotation from the text, and assume that the reader understands how the quotations speaks to the claim. Here is an example:

> Lincoln believed that the Founders would have supported the

> North, because as he said, this country was "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

The writer may be correct that Lincoln believed that the Founders would have supported the North, but what in that quotation would cause a reader to agree? In other words, how does the quotation count as evidence of the claim? The evidence says something about the views of the founders in 1776. How does that support a claim about what the founders would think about 1863? When pressed, the writer explained: "Since the Founders dedicated the country to the proposition that all men are created equal and Lincoln freed the slaves because he thought they were created equal, then he must have thought that he and the Founders agreed, so they would have supported the North. It's obvious."

Well, it's not. After it has been explained, it may or may not be persuasive (after all, the author of "all men are created equal" was himself a slave owner). But it isn't obvious. Quotations rarely speak for themselves; most have to be "unpacked." If you offer only quotes without interpreting those quotes, your reader will likely have trouble understanding how the quote, as evidence, supports your claim. Your paper will seem to be a pastiche of strung-together quotations, suggesting that your data never passed through the critical analysis of a working mind.

Whenever you support a claim with numbers, charts, pictures, and especially quotations — whatever looks like primary data — do not assume that what you see is what your readers will get. Spell out for them how it is that the data counts as evidence for your claim. For a quotation, a good principle is to use a few of its key words just before or after it. Something like this:

> Lincoln believed that the Founders would have supported the North because they would have supported his attempt to move the slaves to a more equal position. He echoes the Founder's own

> language when he says that the country was "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

MAKING YOUR CASE WITHOUT OVERSIMPLIFYING IT

Some inexperienced writers think that the strongest and most persuasive kind of writing projects a voice of utter confidence, complete certainty, and no room for doubt of the possibility of seeing things in a different way. That view could not be more mistaken. If communicating with your readers is like having a serious, mutually respectful conversation with them, then the last kind of person you want to talk with is someone who is **UTTERLY CERTAIN OF EVERYTHING WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS, RESERVATIONS, OR LIMITATIONS.**

Two minutes with such a person is at least one too many. Compare these two passages:

> For more than a century now, every liberal has vehemently argued against any kind of censorship of art and/or entertainment. And in the last 20 years, the courts and the legislatures of Western nations have found these arguments so persuasive that no one remembers any rebuttals to these arguments. Censorship has simply ceased to exist.

> For almost a century now, many liberals have argued against the censorship of art and/or entertainment, and in the last 20 years, courts and the legislatures in most Western nations have found these arguments fairly persuasive. Few people now clearly remember what the rebuttals to these arguments were. Today, in the United States and other democracies, censorship has just about ceased to exist.

Twenty pages of the first prose would quickly grow wearisome. It is too strident, too flat-footed, completely unnuanced. But some would say the second is mealy mouthed, too hedged about with qualifiers. Here is a third version, which neither proclaims nor hedges:

> For a century now, liberals have been arguing against the

> censorship of art and/or entertainment, and in the last 20 years, courts and the legislatures in Western nations have found these arguments so persuasive that few now remember what the rebuttals to these arguments were. Today, in the United States and other democracies, overt censorship by the central government has largely ceased to exist.

It is hard to give completely reliable advice about hedging and emphasizing because different writers have different opinions about it, different fields do it in different ways. But something most of us share is a sense of caution. (Notice that we said "most of us.")

Another kind of reservation you ought to make room for in your papers is plausibly contradictory evidence. No matter what position you take on a text, there will almost always be some evidence in it that someone can use as a basis to disagree with you.

> Lincoln may have been willing to let his readers associate the Founders with the North, but it is not clear that he actually believed that they would have supported the Union. He does not specifically say so. Although he describes what the founders did in the past ("Four score and seven years ago"), he does not say what they would do in the present.

The shrewd writer considers these kinds of objections before readers do, and may include the objections in the essay. Once you think you have constructed an argument that fully supports your claim, skim your reading again specifically looking for evidence that might support a different conclusion. Then raise that evidence and counterclaim in order both to acknowledge and, if you can, rebut them. Even if you can't fully rebut them, you can suggest that the weight of evidence is still on your side. Don't worry that including counter evidence will make your argument less persuasive. On the contrary. While there are exceptions, most academic readers are much more persuaded by writers

who admit reservations then by writers who insist that they are always absolutely correct.

The point here is to avoid the kind of flat-footed, unnuanced, unsophisticated certainty that characterizes the thinking of someone who does not recognize that things are usually more complex, less clear-cut, than most of us wish.

LICENSES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

CHECKLIST: REVISION

- The draft addresses a question or issue that readers will care about.
- The draft is written at the audience's level, accounting for their level of knowledge and attitudes.
- The thesis is clear and placed at or near the beginning of the paper.
- All ideas within the draft relate to the main thesis.
- There are plenty of organizational cues (topic sentences, headings, etc.) to help guide the readers through the paper.
- Ideas are presented in an order that makes sense.
- Paragraphs are long enough to cover the topic, but short enough to keep it interesting.
- The evidence used is relevant and persuasive.
- All ideas are fully developed.
- Any unnecessary material has been deleted.
- The point of view is appropriate both for the draft's purpose and the intended audience.

HOW TO: BE A CONSTRUCTIVE PEER REVIEWER

- You aren't casting judgment on a work, you're coaching the writer. Remember to include the writer in the process, helping them find the draft's strengths and weaknesses rather than telling them what they are or are not doing wrong.
- Check with the writer to make sure you're understanding the main ideas of the work.
- Give specific compliments as well as specific criticism; reviewing isn't just about one or the other.
- If you find a passage confusing, ask the writer for clarification.
- Always express an interest in reading the next draft.